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OUT-OF-DOORS





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God Almighty first planted a garden.

—*Bacon.*

OUT-OF-DOORS



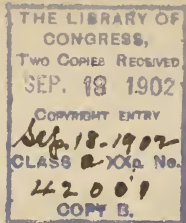
Quotations from Nature Lovers
selected and illustrated

by

ROSALIE ARTHUR



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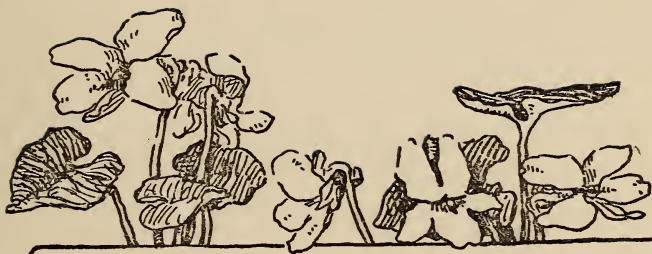
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And though we should be grateful for good
houses, there is, after all, no house like God's
out-of-doors.

—*Stevenson.*



Now fades the last long streak of snow;
Now bourgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Tennyson



Those awful powers on man that wait,
 On man, the beggar or the king,
 To hovel bare or hall of state
 A magic ring that masters fate
 With each succeeding birthday bring.

Therein are set four jewels rare,
 Pearl winter, summer's ruby blaze,
 Spring's emerald, and than all more fair
 Fall's pensive opal, doomed to bear
 A heart of fire, bedreamed with haze.

To him the simple spell that knows
 The spirits of the ring to sway,
 Fresh power with every sunrise flows,
 And royal pursuivants are those
 That fly his mandates to obey.

But he that with a slackened will
 Dreams of things past or things to be,
 From him the charm is slipping still,
 And drops, ere he suspect the ill,
 Into the inexorable sea.

—Lowell.

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn ;
Morning's at seven ;
The hillside's dew-pearled ;
The lark's on the wing ;
The snail's on the thorn ;
God's in His heaven,—
All's right with the world.

—*Browning.*

The first sparrow of Spring! The year beginning with younger hope than ever! The faint silvery warblings heard over the partially bare and moist fields from the blue-bird, the song-sparrow, and the red-wing, as if the last flakes of Winter tinkled as they fell!

—*Thoreau.*

And yonder bluebird with the earth tinge on his breast and the sky tinge on his back,—did he come down out of heaven on that bright March morning when he told us so softly and plaintively that if we pleased, Spring had come?

—*Burroughs.*

The masterful wind was up and out, shouting and chasing, the lord of the morning. Poplars swayed and tossed with a roaring swish; dead leaves sprang aloft, and whirled into space; and all the clear-swept heaven seemed to thrill with sound like a great harp. It was one of the first awakenings of the year. The earth stretched herself, smiling in her sleep; and everything leapt and pulsed to the stir of the giant's movement.

—*Kenneth Grahame.*

Better still do we find it to wander off into the outlying woods; to taste the ebbing life-blood of the maple with lips against the wound, and thrill with its subtle suggestions; to shake the golden dust from drooping tassels of the alder, and part the dingy mat of leaves in search of the swelling, pink-tipped buds of the arbutus; to drink the crystal-cold brook water out of the hollow of the hand, and push bare chilled fingers into a network of clinging roots in the damp, fresh-smelling earth.

—*Elaine Goodale.*

SPRING SONG.

Make me over, mother April,
When the sap begins to stir !
When thy flowery hand delivers
All the mountain-prisoned rivers,
And thy great heart beats and quivers
To revive the days that were,
Make me over, mother April,
When the sap begins to stir !

Take my dust and all my dreaming,
Count my heart-beats one by one,
Send them where the winters perish ;
Then some golden noon cherish
And restore them in the sun,
Flower and scent and dust and dreaming,
With their heart-beats every one !

For I have no choice of being,
When the sap begins to climb,—
Strong insistence, sweet intrusion,
Vasts and verges of illusion,—
So I win, to time's confusion,
The one perfect pearl of time,
Joy and joy and joy forever,
Till the sap forgets to climb !

Let me taste the old immortal
Indolence of life once more ;
Not recalling nor foreseeing,
Let the great slow joys of being
Well my heart through as of yore !
Let me taste the old immortal
Indolence of life once more !

Only make me over, April,
When the sap begins to stir !
Make me man or make me woman,
Make me oaf or ape or human,
Cup of flower or cone of fir ;
Make me anything but neuter
When the sap begins to stir !

—*Bliss Carman.*

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling ;
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

—*Omar Khayyâm.*

TO A WATERFOWL.

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,—
The desert and illimitable air,—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the thin, cold atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall cease,
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows ; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou 'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form ; yet, on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart :

He, who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain
flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

—*Bryant*

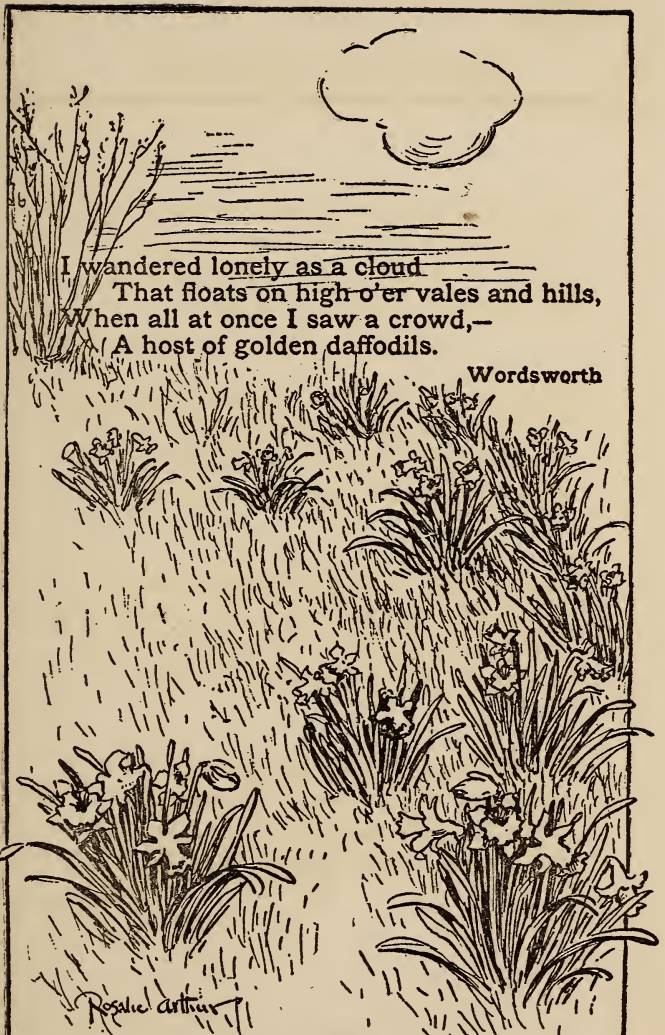
Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year, delaying long ;
Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place ?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

—*Tennyson.*



I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,—
A host of golden daffodils.

Wordsworth

Rosalie Arthur

AT EASTER-TIDE.

At Easter-tide, when lilies blow
 For font and altar, virgin things,
 When spikes of maple scarlet show,
 And thin clouds white as angel's wings,
 While some fresh voice the message flings—
 "The Lord is risen!"—from long ago
 Rise purified the tombèd Springs
 At Easter-tide, when lilies blow.

Oh, when the hallowed hour not brings
 Those gloried ghosts, whose brows we know,
 Nor I o'er change and distance throw
 In midnight prayer an arm that clings,
 Ah then, the deep-toned bell that rings
 I shall not hear, nor hear whatso
 The clear young voice triumphant sings,
 At Easter-tide, when lilies blow!

—*Helen Gray Cone.*

Let mystery have its place in you; do not be always turning up your whole soil with the ploughshare of self-examination, but leave a little fallow corner in your heart ready for any seed the winds may bring, and reserve a nook of shadow for the passing bird; keep a place in your heart for the unexpected guest, an altar for the unknown God. Then if a bird sing among your branches, do not be too eager to tame it. If you are conscious of something new—thought or feeling—wakening in the depths of your being, do not be in a hurry to let in light upon it, to look at it; let the springing germ have the protection of being forgotten, hedge it round with quiet, and do not break in upon its darkness; let it take shape and grow, and not a word of your happiness to anyone!

—*Amiel's Journal.*

Ah, how wonderful is the advent of the Spring!—the great annual miracle of the blossoming of Aaron's rod, repeated on myriads and myriads of branches!—the gentle progression and growth of herbs, flowers, trees,—gentle and yet irrepressible,—which no force can stay, no violence restrain, like love, that wins its way and cannot be withstood by any human power, because itself is divine power. If Spring came but once a century, instead of once a year, or burst forth with the sound of an earthquake, and not in silence, what wonder and expectation would there be in all hearts to behold the miraculous change!

—*Longfellow.*

I saw wild anemones, and heard birds piping on the boughs; the delicate sunshine of the north was sifting through them, and dropping about on the grass as lightly as if it felt that it was taking a liberty. Down in a hollow, gleaming white in the creases between cushions of moss, I saw wandering patches of snow, for the spring had been late, and warm weather had come on suddenly.

—*Jean Ingelow.*

That is the saddest of thoughts—as we grow older the romance fades, and all things become commonplace.

Half our lives are spent in wishing for to-morrow, the other half in wishing for yesterday.

Wild-flowers alone never become commonplace. The white wood-sorrel at the foot of the oak, the violet in the hedge of the vale, the thyme on the wind-swept downs, they were as fresh this year as last, as dear to-day as twenty years since, even dearer, for they grow now, as it were, in the earth we have made for them of our hopes, our prayers, our emotions, our thoughts.

—*Richard Jeffries.*

THE "OLD, OLD STORY."

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen,—
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down,—
Creep home and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among:
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young.

—*Charles Kingsley.*

SONG.

For the tender beech and the sapling oak,
That grow by the shadowy rill,
You may cut down both at a single stroke,
You may cut down which you will.
But this you must know, that as long as they
grow,
Whatever change may be,
You can never teach either oak or beech
To be aught but a greenwood tree.

—*Thomas Love Peacock.*

What is the charm which wakes
The bud, the flower, the fruit, from the cold
ground?
What is the power which makes
With song the groves, with song the fields,
resound?
One spell there is, so strong to move;
Some call it Spring, and others Love.

—*Lewis Morris.*

In these vernal seasons of the year when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake of her rejoicing with heaven and earth.

—*Milton.*

How happy the trees must be to hear the song of birds again in their branches ! After the silence and the leaflessness, to have the birds back once more and to feel them busy at the nest-building ; how glad to give them the moss and fibres and the crutch of the boughs to build in !

—*Richard Jeffries.*

Turn, turn my wheel ! All life is brief ;
 What now is bud will soon be leaf,
 What now is leaf will soon decay ;
 The wind blows east, the wind blows west ;
 The blue eggs in the robin's nest
 Will soon have wings and beak and breast,
 And flutter and fly away.


—*Longfellow.*

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins ;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins ;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

—*Swinburne.*

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows !
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's
edge—
That's the wise thrush ; he sings each song twice
over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first, fine careless rapture !

—*Browning.*



'Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May.

Lowell

That long, clear, cool note, like the arc described by a bright new sickle,—that's the meadow-lark! I know well the springy pastures where he hunts his breakfast, the wind-crisped pools where he sometimes dips his bill.

—*Edith M. Thomas.*

Do you remember that fair little wood of silver birches on the West Branch of the Neversink, somewhat below the place where the Biscuit Brook runs in? There is a mossy terrace raised a couple of feet above the water of a long, still pool; and a very pleasant spot for a friendship-fire on the shingly beach below you; and a plenty of painted trilliums and yellow violets and white foam-flowers to adorn your woodland banquet, if it be spread in the month of May, when Mistress Nature is given over to embroidery.

* —*Henry van Dyke.*

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*AN ANGLER'S WISH.

I

When tulips bloom in Union Square,
And timid breaths of vernal air
 Go wandering down the dusty town,
Like children lost in Vanity Fair ;

When every long, unlovely row
Of westward houses stand aglow,
 And leads the eyes toward sunset skies
Beyond the hills where green trees grow ;

Then weary seems the street parade,
And weary books, and weary trade :
 I'm only wishing to go a-fishing ;
For this the month of May was made.

II

I guess the pussy-willows now
Are creeping out on every bough
 Along the brook ; and robins look
For early worms behind the plough.

The thistle-birds have changed their dun
For yellow coats, to match the sun ;
And in the same array of flame
The Dandelion Show's begun.

The flocks of young anemones
Are dancing round the budding trees :
Who can help wishing to go a-fishing
In days as full of joys as these ?

III

I think the meadow-lark's clear sound
Leaks upward slowly from the ground,
While on the wing, the bluebirds ring
Their wedding-bells to woods around.

The flirting chewink calls his dear
Behind the bush ; and very near,
Where water flows, where green grass grows,
Song-sparrows gently sing, " Good cheer."

And, best of all, through twilight calm
The hermit-thrush repeats his psalm.
How much I'm wishing to go a-fishing
In days so sweet with music's balm !

IV

'Tis not a proud desire of mine ;
I ask for nothing superfine ;
 No heavy weight, no salmon great,
To break the record, or my line:

Only an idle little stream,
Whose amber waters softly gleam,
 Where I may wade through woodland shade,
And cast the fly, and loaf, and dream:

Only a trout or two, to dart
From foaming pools and try my art :
 No more I'm wishing—old-fashioned fishing,
And just a day on Nature's heart.

—*Henry van Dyke.*

Nature yields nothing to the sybarite. The meadow glows with buttercups in spring, the hedges are green, the woods lovely ; but these are not to be enjoyed in their full significance unless you have traversed the same places when bare, and have watched the slow fulfilment of the flowers.

—*Richard Jeffries.*



Apple blossoms, budding, blowing,
In the soft May air:
Cups with sunshine overflowing,—
Flakes of fragrance, drifting, snowing,
Showering everywhere.

Lucy Larcom



Rosalie Arthur

Gazing up into the exquisitely pure and tender sky, behind an overhanging cloud of blossoms, heavy with sweet odors, who would not divine the hush and mystery of summer days, "that scarce dare breathe, they are so beautiful." And while we are wrapt in this delicious, dreamy repose, we question idly of unimagined splendors, and give ourselves up to the luxury of wondering whether long vistas of never-ceasing bloom, or orchards mixed along the open way with grassy fields and green stretches of woodland, make the perfect paradise.

—*Elaine Goodale.*

The truths of nature are one eternal change, one infinite variety. There is no bush on the face of the globe exactly like another bush ; there are no two trees in the forest whose boughs bend into the same network, nor two leaves on the same tree which could not be told one from the other, nor two waves in the sea exactly alike.

—*Ruskin.*

Earth to earth ! That was the frank note, the joyous summons of the day . . . when boon Nature, reticent no more, was singing that full-throated song of hers that thrills and claims control of every fibre. The air was wine ; the moist earth-smell, wine ; the lark's song, the wafts from the cow-shed at top of the field, the pant and smoke of a distant train,—all were wine,—or song, was it ? or odor, this unity they all blended into ?

—*Kenneth Grahame.*

We have been cowslipping to-day in a little wood dignified by the name of the Hirschwald, because it is the happy hunting-ground of innumerable deer who fight there in the autumn evenings, calling each other out to combat with bayings that ring through the silence and send agreeable shivers through the lonely listener. I often walk there in September, late in the evening, and, sitting on a fallen tree, listen fascinated to their angry cries.

We made cowslip balls sitting on the grass. The babies had never seen such things nor had imagined anything half so sweet. The Hirschwald is a little open wood of silver birches and springy turf starred with flowers, and there is a tiny stream meandering amiably about it and decking itself in June with yellow flags.

—“*Elizabeth and her German Garden.*”

AUF WIEDERSEHEN !

The little gate was reached at last,
Half hid in lilacs down the lane ;
She pushed it wide, and, as she past,
A wistful look she backward cast,
And said,—“ *Auf wiedersehen !* ”

With hand on latch, a vision white
Lingered reluctant, and again
Half doubting if she did aright,
Soft as the dewes that fell that night,
She said,—“ *Auf wiedersehen !* ”

The lamp's clear gleam flits up the stair ;
I linger in delicious pain ;
Ah, in that chamber, whose rich air
To breathe in thought I scarcely dare,
Thinks she,—“ *Auf wiedersehen !* ”

'Tis thirteen years ; once more I press
The turf that silences the lane ;
I hear the rustle of her dress,
I smell the lilacs, and—ah, yes,
I hear “ *Auf wiedersehen !* ”

Sweet piece of bashful maiden art!
The English words had seemed too fain,
But these—they drew us heart to heart,
Yet held us tenderly apart;
She said, “ *Auf wiedersehen!* ”

—Lowell.

WITH THREE FLOWERS.

Herewith I send you three pressed withered
flowers :

This one was white with golden star ; this, blue
As Capri's cave ; that purple and shot through
With sunset-orange. Where the Duomo towers
In diamond air, and under pendent bowers
The Arno glides, this faded violet grew
On Landor's grave ; from Landor's heart it drew
Its clouded azure in the long spring hours.
Within the shadow of the Pyramid
Of Caius Cestius was the daisy found,
White as the soul of Keats in Paradise.
The pansy—there were hundreds of them hid
In the thick grass that folded Shelley's mound,
Guarding his ashes with most lovely eyes.

—Aldrich.

THE RHODORA.

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay ;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora ! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being :
Why wert thou there, O rival of the rose !
I never thought to ask, I never knew :
But in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there
brought you.

—*Emerson.*

You never get so close to the birds as when you are wading quietly down a little river, casting your fly deftly under the branches for the wary trout, but ever on the lookout for all the various pleasant things that nature has to bestow upon you. Here you shall come upon the cat-bird at her morning bath, and hear her sing, in a clump of pussy-willows, that low, tender, confidential song which she keeps for the hours of domestic intimacy. The spotted sandpiper will run along the stones before you, crying, "*Wet-feet, wet-feet!*" and bowing and teetering in the friendliest manner, as if to show you the way to the best pools.

* — *Henry van Dyke*,

O flower-de-luce, bloom on, and let the river
Linger to kiss thy feet !
O flower of song, bloom on, and make forever
The world more fair and sweet.

— *Longfellow*.

* From "Little Rivers." Copyright 1897, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

A RONDEL OF PARTING.

You leave it when spring blossoms fall,
The old house where the roses grew.
You gave them from the garden wall,
Your roses faint of breath and hue,
Whose lovely like I never knew.
Can I my flock of memories call
To leave it when spring blossoms fall,
The old house where the roses grew ?

No, no, they flit about the hall,
And beat their wings, and cry for you.
Be still: no more, no more at all,
She enters now: apart we two
Shall see in dreams, when late leaves fall,
The House of Youth, where roses grew !

—*Helen Gray Cone.*

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose !
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should
close !

The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence and whither flown again, who knows !

—*Omar Khayyâm.*

Gladness of woods, skies, waters, all in one,
The bobolink has come, and, like the soul
Of the sweet season vocal in a bird,
Gurgles in ecstasy we know not what,
Save *June ! Dear June ! Now God be praised for June.*

—*Lowell.*

O goodly damp smell of the ground !
O rough sweet bark of the trees !
O clear sharp cracklings of sound !
O life that's a-thrill and a-bound
With the vigor of boyhood and morning, and the
noontide's rapture of ease !
Was there ever a weary heart in the world ?
A lag in the body's urge or a flag of the spirit's
wings ?
Did a man's heart ever break
For a lost hope's sake ?
For here there is lilt in the quiet and calm in the
quiver of things.

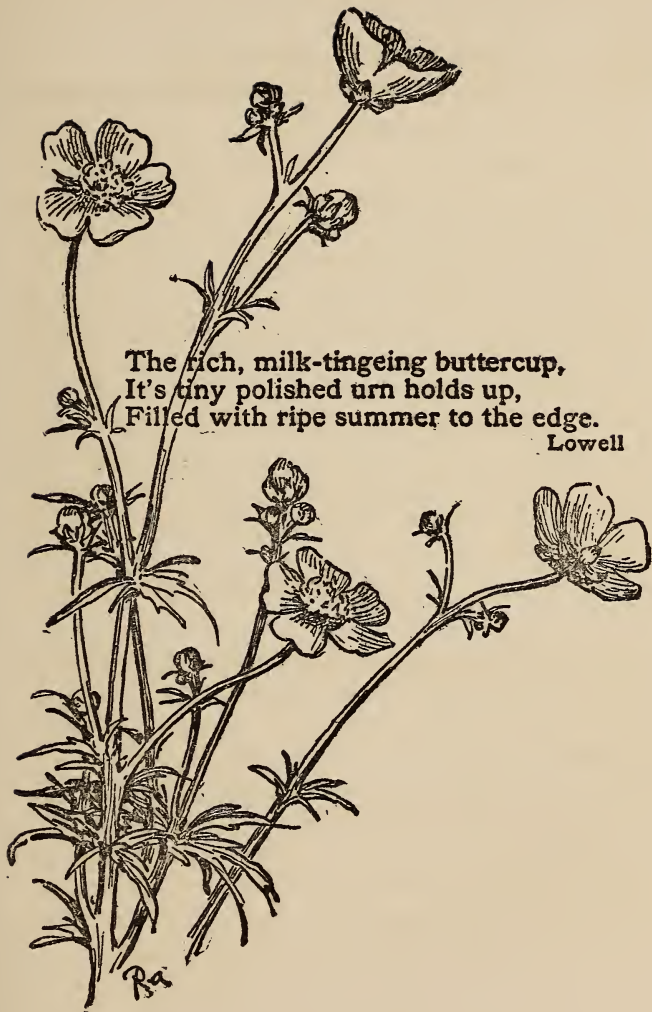
—*Richard Hovey.*

To-day the roses have brought into my little patch of garden the hues with which sun and sea proclaimed their everlasting marriage in the twilight of yestereven. In the deep, passionate heart of these splendid flowers, fragrant since they bloomed in Sappho's hand centuries ago, this sublime wedlock is annually celebrated; earth and sky meet and commingle in this miracle of color and sweetness, and when I carry this lovely flower into my study all the poets fall silent; here is a depth of life, a radiant outcome from the heart of mysteries, a hint of unimagined beauty, such as they have never brought to me in all their seeking.

—*Hamilton Wright Mabie.*

The whole atmosphere has a luminous serenity, a limpid clearness. The islands are like swans swimming in a golden stream. Peace, splendor, boundless space! . . . I long to catch the wild bird, happiness, and tame it. These mornings impress me indescribably. They intoxicate me, they carry me away. I feel beguiled out of myself, dissolved in sunbeams, breezes, perfumes, and sudden impulses of joy. And yet all the time I pine for I know not what intangible Eden.

—*Amiel's Journal.*



The rich, milk-tingeing buttercup,
It's tiny polished urn holds up,
Filled with ripe summer to the edge.

Lowell

There are few sights in Nature more restful to the soul than a daisied field in June. Whether it be at the dewy hour of sunrise, with blithe matin songs still echoing among the tree tops, or while the luxuriant splendor of noontide fills the delicate tints of the early foliage with a pure glory of light, or in that more pensive time when long shadows are thrown eastward and the fresh breath of the sea is felt, or even under the solemn mantle of darkness, when all forms have faded from sight and the night air is musical with the murmurs of innumerable insects: amid all the varying moods through which the daily cycle runs, the abiding sense is of unalloyed happiness, the profound tranquillity of mind and heart that nothing ever brings save the contemplation of perfect beauty.

One's thought is carried back for the moment to that morning of the world when God looked upon His work and saw that it was good.

—*John Fiske.*

In June 'tis good to lie beneath a tree
While the blithe season comforts every sense,
Steeps all the brain in rest, and heals the heart,
Brimming it o'er with sweetness unawares,
Fragrant and silent as that rosy snow
Wherewith the pitying apple-tree fills up
And tenderly lines some last-year robin's nest.

—*Lowell.*

'Twas one of the charméd days
When the genius of God doth flow ;
The wind may alter twenty different ways,
A tempest cannot blow ;
It may blow north, it still is warm ;
Or south, it still is clear ;
Or east, it smells like a clover-farm ;
Or west, no thunder fear.

—*Emerson.*

And what is so rare as a day in June ?
Then, if ever, come perfect days ;
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays.

—*Lowell.*

WORLDLINESS.

The World is too much with us ; late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
 Little we see in nature that is ours ;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !

This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
 The winds that will be howling at all hours
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;

It moves us not. Great God ! I'd rather be
 A Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,—
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less for-
 lorn ;
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

—*Wordsworth.*

NOCTURNE.

Up to her chamber window
A slight wire trellis goes,
And up this Romeo's ladder
Clambers a bold white rose.

I lounge in the ilex shadows ;
I see the lady lean,
Unclasping her silken girdle
The curtain's folds between.

She smiles on her white-rose lover,
She reaches out her hand
And helps him in at the window—
I see it where I stand !

To her scarlet lip she holds him
And kisses him many a time—
Ah me ! it was he that won her
Because he dared to climb !

—*Aldrich.*

THE SHEPHERDESS.

She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them
white ;
She guards them from the steep.
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right ;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

—*Alice Meynell.*

Flowers are the sweetest things that God ever made and forgot to put a soul into.

—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

Since His blessed kingdom was first established in the green fields, by the lakeside, with humble fishermen for its subjects, the easiest way into it hath ever been through the wicket-gate of a lowly and grateful fellowship with nature. He that feels not the beauty and blessedness and peace of the woods and meadows that God hath bedecked with flowers for him, even while he is yet a sinner, how shall he learn to enjoy the unfading bloom of the celestial country if he ever become a saint?

—* *Henry van Dyke.*

Each bud flowers but once and each flower has but its minute of perfect beauty; so, in the garden of the soul, each feeling has, as it were, its flowering instant, its one and only moment of expansive grace and radiant kingship.

—*Amiel's Journal.*

A willow-wren still remembered his love, and whispered about it to the silent fir tops, as in after days we turn the pages of letters, withered as leaves, and sigh. So gentle, so low, so tender a song the willow-wren sang that it could scarce be known as the voice of a bird, but was like that of some yet more delicate creature with the heart of a woman.

—*Richard Jeffries.*

If we had never before looked upon the earth, but suddenly came to it man or woman grown, set down in the midst of a summer mead, would it not seem to us a radiant vision? The hues, the shapes, the song and life of birds, above all the sunlight, the breath of heaven, resting on it; the mind would be filled with its glory, unable to grasp it, hardly believing that such things could be mere matter and no more. Like a dream of some spirit-land it would appear, scarce fit to be touched lest it should fall to pieces, too beautiful to be long watched lest it should fade away.

—*Richard Jeffries.*

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky.

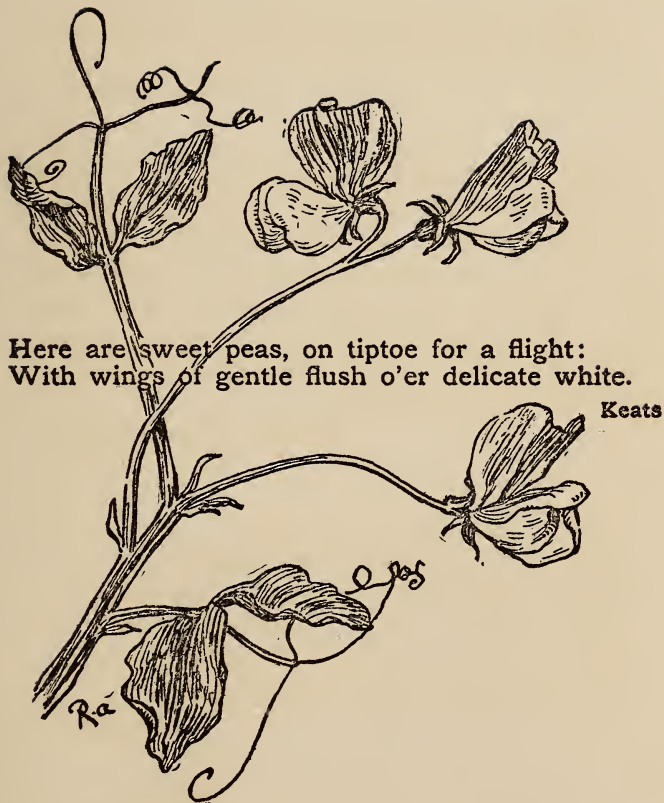
—*George Herbert.*

What a depth of tender color fills the arch of heaven as it bends over this playground of the blooming and beauty-laden forces of nature! The great summer clouds, shaping their courses to invisible harbors across the trackless aerial sea, love to drop anchor here and slowly trail their mighty shadows, vainly striving for something that shall make them fast.

Hamilton Wright Mabie.

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower,—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

—*Tennyson.*



Here are sweet peas, on tiptoe for a flight:
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white.

Keats

Few flowers bloomed for me upon the lonesome rock ; but I made the most of all I had, and neither knew of nor desired more. Ah, how beautiful they were ! Tiny stars of crimson sorrel, threaded on their long brown stems ; the blackberry blossoms in bridal white ; the surprise of the blue-eyed grass ; the crowfoot flowers, like drops of yellow gold spilt about among the short grass and over the moss ; the rich, blue-purple beach-pea ; the sweet, spiked germander, and the homely, delightful yarrow that grows thickly on all the islands. Sometimes its broad clusters of dull white bloom are stained a lovely reddish-purple, as if with the light of sunset. I never saw it colored so elsewhere.

—*Celia Thaxter.*

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
 Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,
 Thy sweet, hard kisses are strong like wine,
 Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
 Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
 Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
 Those pure cold populous graves of thine,
 Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

—*Swinburne.*

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS.

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their
streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl ;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl !
And every chambered cell
Where its dim, dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed !

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil ;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the
old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap forlorn !
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn !
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice
that sings :

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll !
Leave thy low-vaulted past !
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting
sea !

~Holmes.

The woods are glistening as fresh and fair as if they had been new-created overnight. The water sparkles with merriment, and tiny waves are dancing and singing all along the shore. Scarlet berries of the mountain-ash hang around the lake like a necklace of coral. A pair of kingfishers dart back and forth across the bay in flashes of living blue. A black eagle swings silently around in his circle, far up in the cloudless sky. The air is full of pleasant sounds, but there is no noise.

—* *Henry van Dyke.*

Perfect weather for an outdoor July merry-making . . . Nature seems to make a hot pause just then—all the loveliest flowers are gone; the sweet time of early growth and vague hopes is past; and yet the time of harvest and ingathering is not come, and we tremble at the possible storms that may ruin the precious fruit in the moment of its ripeness. The woods are all of one dark monotonous green; the wagon-loads of hay no longer creep along the lanes, scattering their sweet-smelling fragments on the blackberry branches; the pastures are often a little tanned, yet the corn has not got its last splendor of red and gold.

—*George Eliot.*

* From "Fisherman's Luck." Copyright 1899, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

At night the air carries a heavier freight of woody and vegetable odors than during the hours of sunlight ; the breeze advises us of a new Orient or Spice Islands, discovered in the familiar latitude of our fields, bringing the scent of blossoming clover and grain. Brushing along some tangled border, we guess " in embalmed darkness " that the milk-weed is in bloom, though its perfume bears a reminder of spring and the hyacinth. Here also is the evening primrose, whose flower ought to be as dear to the night as the daisy is to the day ; and why should there not be a night's eye on the floral records ?

—*Edith M. Thomas.*

Above, the clear sky was full of stars, and among them the beautiful planet Jupiter shone serene. The sky was of a lovely night blue ; it was an hour to think, to dream, to revere, to love—a time when, if ever it will, the soul reigns, and the coarse, rude acts of day are forgotten in the aspirations of the inmost mind.

The night was calm—still ; it was in no haste to do anything—it had nothing it needed to do. To be, is enough for the stars.

—*Richard Jeffries.*

THE SONG OF THE SINGER.

Day long upon the dreaming hills,
One watched the idle hours fade by
And had no thought of other thing
Than waving grass and summer sky.

And all the wilding scents and sounds
The lavish-hearted season brought
He made his own, and prisoned them
Within the little songs he wrought.

While he was singing, in the town
His busy brethren bought and sold,
And got them place and circumstance,
And all the pride and pomp of gold.

But when the night came with the stars,
And on the hills her silence laid,
He, homeward turning, bore with him
Naught save the careless songs he made.

“ O Prodigal ! ” his brothers cried,
“ And have you done no better thing ?
And is it thus you spend your day—
To dream in sunshine and to sing ? ”

But he, remembering those still hours
 The dream had made so eloquent—
 The waving grass, the summer sky,
 The purple hill-side—smiled, content.*

—*Arthur Ketchum.*

Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?
 Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its stalk?

—*Emerson.*

Mounting toward the upland again, I pause
 reverently as the hush and stillness of twilight
 come upon the woods. It is the sweetest, ripest
 hour of the day. And as the hermit's evening
 hymn goes up from the deep solitude below me,
 I experience that serene exaltation of sentiment
 of which music, literature and religion are but the
 faint types and symbols.

—*Burroughs.*

Old earth, how beautiful thou art !
Though restless fancy wander wide
And sigh in dreams for spheres more blest,
Save for some trouble, half-confessed,
Some least misgiving, all my heart
With such a world were satisfied.
Had every day such skies of blue,
Were men all wise, and women true,
Might youth as calm as manhood be,
And might calm manhood keep its lore
And still be young—and one thing more,
Old earth were fair enough for me.

Ah, sturdy world, old patient world !
Thou hast seen many times and men ;
Heard jibes and curses at thee hurled
From cynic lip and peevish pen.
But give the mother once her due :
Were women wise, and men all true—
And one thing more that may not be,
Old earth were fair enough for me.

—*Edward Rowland Sill.*



High on the crest of the blossoming grasses,
Bending and swaying with face toward the sky,
Stirred by the lightest west wind as it passes,
Hosts of the silver-white daisy-stars lie.

Margaret Deland



Would you for a while shut out the earth and fill your eye with the heavens, lie down, some summer day, on the great mother's lap, with a soft grass pillow under your head; then look around and above you, and see how slight, apparently, is your terrestrial environment, how foreshortened has become the foreground,—only a few nodding bents of blossomed grass, a spray of clover with a bumble-bee probing for honey, and in the distance, perhaps, the billowy outline of the diminished woods. What else you see is the blue of heaven illimitably stretched above and around you. You seem to be lying not so much on the surface of the earth as at the bottom of the sky. Under this still, transparent sea, "deeper than did ever plummet sound," your own thoughts and imaginings have become a treasure-trove of inestimable wealth and rarity. You do not care to move, lest in so doing you break the deep sky charm, and your treasure-trove vanish.

—*Edith M. Thomas.*

O my life, have we not had seasons
That only said, Live and rejoice?
That asked not for causes and reasons,
But made us all feeling and voice?
When we went with the winds in their blowing,
When nature and we were peers,
And we seemed to share in the flowing
Of the inexhaustible years?
Have we not from the earth drawn juices
Too fine for earth's sordid uses?
Have I heard, have I seen
All I feel and I know?
Doth my heart overween?
Or could it have been
Long ago?

Sometimes a breath floats by me,
An odor from Dreamland sent,
That makes the ghost seem nigh me
Of a splendor that came and went,
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not
In what diviner sphere,
Of memories that stay not and go not,
Like music heard once by an ear
That cannot forget or reclaim it,
A something so shy, it would shame it
To make it a show,
A something too vague, could I name it,
For others to know,
As if I had lived it or dreamed it,
As if I had acted or schemed it,
Long ago !

—*Lowell.*

About the 1st of August the delicate ear, no less than the clear sight, can detect the wane of summer. It is no use trying to comfort yourself with the calendar: there is a still small voice in the atmosphere. There will be sultry days and close nights and volleying showers, but, in spite of all, there is a growing restfulness, as if the zest of it were over and the lusty hours had grown mature. The first intimation will come from the cricket that ticks the transitions of the heyday in the grass, and presently the preliminary creak of the cicada will remind you that the coming six weeks lead up to the frost.

—*J. P. Mowbray.*

The path of nature is indeed a narrow one, and it is only the immortals that seek it, and, when they find it, do not find themselves cramped therein.

—*Lowell.*

LONG SUMMER DAYS.

Long summer days are my desire :
Red suns that drop as globes of fire
Behind the sloped fields white with weed :
Warm winds, that waft the wandering seed
With silvery plume, now low, now higher :
Pale clematis that o'er the brier
Runs with frail feet that never tire
Beside rough roads : your gifts I need,
Long summer days !

Yet come not, O profane ones ! nigher,
If in your stars of severance dire
Of dear companionship decreed :
For then, alas ! ye were indeed,
Too far outstripping my desire,
Long summer days !
—*Helen Gray Cone.*

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

What was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river ?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly by the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river :
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sate the great god Pan,
While turbidly ran the river ;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it grew by the river !)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sate by the river.

‘ This is the way ’, laughed the great god Pan,
 (Laughed as he sate by the river,)
‘ The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed.’
Then dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
 He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan,
 Piercing sweet by the river !
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan !
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
 Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
 To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man :
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
 As a reed with the reeds in the river.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

The slumbrous August noons are full of color and movement, when the rhythmic flow of the wind is hushed by the measured sweep of cradles, and the uncut grain on the uplands falls evenly in soft, bright waves athwart the sunny field. Reclining on its borders, we follow at our ease the rapid, graceful motions of raking and binding; for pleasant and picturesque it is to see a tall lad grasp his armful and deftly twist the shining strands with wonted ease and freedom. And when at last the pure golden sheaves stand upright against the reddish bronze of the stubble, then leaning breathlessly against the massy pile, or nestling underneath its warm and quivering shadow, how exquisite the sensation that steals under the closed eyelids, and over the flushed temples, till the very finger-tips and ends of the hair begin to burn and creep!

—*Elaine Goodale.*

SEA-WAY,

The tide slips up the silver sand,
Dark night and rosy day;
It brings sea-treasures to the land,
Then bears them all away.
On mighty shores from east to west
It wails, and gropes, and cannot rest.

O Tide, that still doth ebb and flow
Through night to golden day:—
Wit, learning, beauty, come and go,
Thou giv'st—thou tak'st away.
But sometime, on some gracious shore,
Thou shalt lie still and ebb no more.

Ellen Mackay Hutchinson



And lo ! in a flash of crimson splendor, with blazing scarlet clouds running before his chariot, and heralding his majestic approach, God's sun rises upon the world.

—*Thackeray.*

For days past there have been intangible hints of change in earth and air ; the birds are silent, and the universal strident note of insect life makes more musical to memory the melodies of the earlier season. The sense of overflowing vitality which pervaded all things a few days ago, when the tide was at the flood, has gone ; the tide has turned, and already one sees the receding movement of the ebb.

—*Hamilton Wright Mabie.*

CROSSING THE BAR.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving, seems asleep,
Too full of sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless
deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have cross'd the bar.

—*Tennyson.*

Now came fulfillment of the year's desire,
 The tall wheat, colored by the August fire
 Grew heavy-headed, dreading its decay,
 And blacker grew the elm trees day by day.
 About the edges of the yellow corn,
 And o'er the gardens grown somewhat outworn
 The bees went hurrying to fill up their store ;
 The apple boughs bent over more and more ;
 With peach and apricot the garden wall
 Was odorous, and the pears began to fall
 From off the high tree with each freshening
 breeze.

—*William Morris.*

The birds, in a new, but less holiday suit, turn their faces southward. The swallows flock and go ; silently and unobserved, the thrushes go. Autumn arrives, bringing finches, warblers, sparrows, and kinglets from the North. Silently the procession passes. Yonder hawk, sailing peacefully away till he is lost in the horizon, is a symbol of the closing season and the departing birds.

—*Burroughs.*

TWILIGHT.

September's slender crescent grows again
Distinct in yonder peaceful evening red,
Clearer the stars are sparkling overhead,
And all the sky is pure, without a stain.

Cool blows the evening wind from out the West
And blows the flowers, the last sweet flowers
that bloom,—
Pale asters, many a heavy-waving plume
Of goldenrod that bends as if oppress.

The summer songs are hushed. Up the lone
shore
The weary waves wash sadly, and a grief
Sounds in the wind, like farewells fond and
brief.
The cricket's chirp but makes the silence more.

Life's autumn comes ; the leaves begin to fall ;
The moods of spring and summer pass away ;
The glory and the rapture day by day
Depart, and soon the quiet grave folds all.

O thoughtful sky, how many eyes in vain
Are lifted to your beauty, full of tears !
How many hearts go back through all the years,
Heavy with loss, eager with questioning pain,

To read the dim Hereafter, to obtain
One glimpse beyond the earthly curtain, where
Their dearest dwell, where they may be or e'er
September's slender crescent shines again !

—*Celia Thaxter.*

There, alone, I went down to the sea. I stood
where the foam came to my feet, and looked out
over the sunlit waters. The great earth bearing
the richness of the harvest, and its hills golden
with corn, was at my back, its strength and firm-
ness under me. The great sun shone above, the
wide sea was before me, the wind came sweet
and strong from the waves. The life of the earth
and the sea, the glow of the sun, filled me.

—*Richard Jeffries.*

September sets her quiet banquets occasionally, and, like Hamlet, we eat the air, promise-crammed. There are breakfasts of sunrise and long hours of aerial lunch, when the atmosphere is golden with invisible fruit, and all one can do is to feed the senses. Then it is that the old, worn earth is very beautiful, as she sits with her hands crossed in her bounteous lap. With her labor all finished, one might say that she crooned softly on a royal death-bed.

—*J. P. Mowbray.*

This is the month of quiet days, crimson creepers and blackberries; of mellow afternoons in the ripening garden; of tea under the acacias instead of the too shady beeches There is a feeling about this month that reminds me of March and the early days of April, when spring is still hesitating on the threshold and the garden holds its breath in expectation. There is the same mildness in the air, and the sky and grass have the same look as then; but the leaves tell a different tale, and the reddening creeper on the house is rapidly approaching its last and loveliest glory.

—“*Elizabeth and her German Garden.*”



Graceful, tossing plume of glowing gold,
Waving lonely on the rocky ledge;
Leaning seaward, lovely to behold,
Clinging to the high cliff's ragged edge.

Celia Thaxter



A warm red lies on the hill-side above the woods, as if the red dawn stayed there through the day ; it is the heath and heather seeds ; and higher still, a pale yellow fills the larches. The whole of the great hill glows with color under the short hours of the October sun ; and overhead, where the pine-cones hang, the sky is of the deepest azure. The conflagration of the woods burning luminously crowds into those short hours a brilliance the slow summer does not know.

—*Richard Jeffries.*

But a short time since the trees were alike green. Now they are being tried, as by the touchstone, and begin to show characteristic differences. How many carats fine is the gold of the beech, the walnut, the chestnut ?

—*Editb M. Thomas.*

And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves.

—*Tennyson.*

IN SEPTEMBER.

The beech is dipped in wine ; the shower
Is burnished ; on the swinging flower

The latest bee doth sit.

The low sun stares through dust of gold,
And o'er the darkening heath and wold

The large ghost-moth doth flit.

In every orchard Autumn stands
With apples in his golden hands.

—*Alexander Smith.*

Along the roadside, like the flowers of gold
That tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,
Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod,
And the red pennons of the cardinal flowers
Hang motionless upon their upright staves.

—*Whittier.*

INFLUENCES.

If quiet autumn mornings would not come,
With golden light, and haze, and harvest wain,
And spices of the dead leaves at my feet ;
If sunsets would not burn through cloud, and
stain

With fading rosy flush the dusky dome ;
If the young mother would not croon that sweet
Old sleep-song, like the robin's in the rain ;
If the great cloud-ships would not float and drift
Across such blue all the calm afternoon ;
If night were not so hushed ; or if the moon
Might pause forever by that pearly rift,
Nor fill the garden with its flood again ;
If the world were not what it still must be,
Then might I live forgetting love and thee.

—*Edward Rowland Sill.*

TO AUTUMN.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness !

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun :
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves
run ;

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the gourd and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy
cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granery floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy
hook
Spares the next swath and all its twin'd
flowers;

And sometime like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
Or by a cider-press with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozyings, hours by
hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are
they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;
Hedge-cricket sing ; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

—*Keats.*

Once more the illimitable days are woven of haze and sunshine, and in the long bright wolds the buckwheat fields are turning brown,—brown streaked with olive and tinged with red, like the colors of health on a sunburnt cheek. There are dull, dusky reds and tawny golds in the strips of woodland that island the plain; the woodbine flings out a scarlet creeper from its background of rich maroon, and the ivory walnut slips its outer covering of dingy green, while the chestnuts in their satin-lined bed are already of a delicate fawn-color.

—*Elaine Goodale.*

The air is not balmy, but tart and pungent like the flavor of the red-cheeked apples by the roadside. In the sky not a cloud, not a speck; a vast dome of blue ether lightly suspended above the world. The woods are heaped with color like a painter's palette—great splashes of red and orange and gold. The ponds and streams bear upon their bosoms leaves of all tints, from the deep maroon of the oak to the pale yellow of the chestnut.

—*Burroughs*

And so the ripe year wanes. From turfy slopes afar the breeze brings delicious, pungent, spicy odors from the wild everlasting flowers, and the mushrooms are pearly in the grass. I gather the seed-pods in the garden beds, sharing their bounty with the birds I love so well, for there are enough and to spare for us all. Soon will set in the fitful weather, with fierce gales and sullen skies and frosty air, and it will be time to tuck up safely my roses and lilies and the rest for their long winter sleep beneath the snow, where I never forget them, but ever dream of their waking in happy summers yet to be.

—*Celia Thaxter.*

The sunshine was on them: that early autumn sunshine which we should know was not summer's, even if there were not the touches of yellow on the lime and chestnut; the Sunday sunshine, too, which has more than autumnal calmness for the working man: the morning sunshine, which still leaves the dew-crystals on the fine gossamer webs in the shadow of the bushy hedgerows.

—*George Eliot.*

October is the opal month of the year. It is the month of glory, of ripeness. It is the picture month.

—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

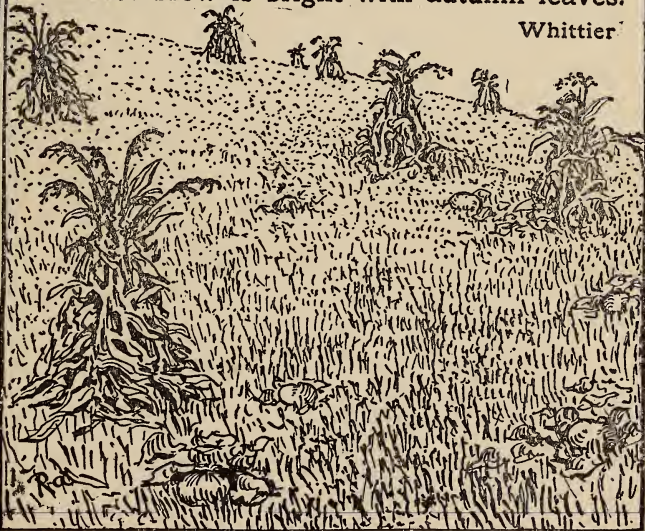
There is no season when such pleasant and sunny spots may be lighted on, and produce so pleasant an effect on the feelings, as now in October. The sunshine is peculiarly genial; and in sheltered places, as on the side of a bank, or of a barn or house, one becomes acquainted and friendly with the sunshine. It seems to be of a kindly and homely nature. And the green grass strewn with a few withered leaves looks the more green and beautiful for them. In summer or spring Nature is farther from one's sympathies.

—*Hawthorne.*

Once more the liberal year laughs out
O'er richer stores than gems or gold;
Once more with harvest-song and shout
Is Nature's bloodless triumph told.

Our common mother rests and sings
Like Ruth, among her garnered sheaves,
Her lap is full of goodly things,
Her brow is bright with autumn leaves.

Whittier



What visionary tints the year puts on
When falling leaves falter through motionless air
Or numbly cling and shiver to be gone!
How shimmer the low flats and pastures bare,
As with her nectar Hebe Autumn fills
The bowl between me and those distant
hills,
And smiles and shakes abroad her misty tremu-
lous hair!

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar shadows
Drowse on the crisp, gray moss; the plough-
man's call
Creeps faint as smoke from black fresh-furrowed
meadows;
The single crow a single caw lets fall;
And all around me every bush and tree
Says Autumn's here, and Winter soon
will be,
Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence
over all.

—Lowell.

The beautiful mountain stream ran swirlingly but softly in front of us, weaving and melting into confluent and vanishing curves, and making an intoxicating chromotype of colour, as it swept in under the overhanging shadows and out again into the radiant sunlight, murmuring very softly as if subdued to the season. Here and there a cardinal-flower, that leaned over to look at itself out of its own green and tangled cloister, shot a spark of color downward, and against a gnarled bank the water spun silver tissues over the old gold of the sand. Somewhere out of sight, we could hear the muffled drum-beat of a little cascade pounding against the wet rock. That was all. It was like an oboe uncertainly played.

—*J. P. Mowbray.*

October was mellowing fast, and with it the year itself; full of tender hints, in woodland and hedgerow, of a course well-nigh completed. From all sides that still afternoon you caught the quick breathing and sob of the runner nearing the goal.

—*Kenneth Grahame.*

St. Martin's summer is still lingering, and the days all begin in mist Nothing could be lovelier than the last rosebuds, or than the delicate gaufred edges of the strawberry leaves embroidered with hoar-frost, while above them Arachne's delicate webs hung swaying in the green branches of the pines—little ball-rooms for the fairies, carpeted with powdered pearls, and kept in place by a thousand dewy strands, hanging from above like the chains of a lamp, and supporting them from below like the anchors of a vessel. These little airy edifices had all the fantastic lightness of the elf-world, and all the vaporous freshness of dawn.

—*Amiel's Journal*

TO S. R. CROCKETT.

Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain
are flying,

Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,
Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups
are crying,

My heart remembers how !

Gray recumbent tombs of the dead in desert
places,

Standing stones on the vacant wine-red moor,
Hills of sheep, and the homes of the silent van-
ished races,

And winds, austere and pure.

Be it granted me to behold you again in dying,
Hills of home ! and to hear again the call ;

Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees
crying,

And hear no more at all !

—*Stevenson.*

That time of year thou may'st in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the
cold,—

Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds
sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest :
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love
more strong,

To love that well which thou must leave ere
long.

—*Shakespeare.*

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN.

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late, and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

—Bryant.



AUTUMN SONG



Red leaf, gold leaf,
Flutter down the wind :
Life is brief, oh ! life is brief,
But Mother Earth is kind ;
From her dear bosom ye shall spring
To new blossoming.

The red leaf, the gold leaf,
They have had their way ;
Love is long if life be brief,—
Life is but a day :
And Love from Grief and Death shall spring
To new blossoming.

Ellen Mackay Hutchinson.



AFFAIRE D'AMOUR.

One pale November day,
Flying Summer paused,
They say :
And growing bolder,
O'er rosy shoulder
Threw to her Lover such a glance,
That Autumn's heart began to dance.
(O happy Lover !)

A leafless Peach-tree bold
Thought for him she smiled,
I'm told ;
And, stirred by love,
His sleeping sap did move,
Decking each naked branch with green
To show her that her look was seen !
(Alas ! poor Lover !)

But Summer, laughing, fled,
Nor knew he loved her !
'T is said
The Peach-tree sighed,
And soon he gladly died :
And Autumn, weary of the chase,
Came on at Winter's sober pace.
(O careless Lover !)

—Margaret Deland.

There are some laggard days in November that have been left behind by the autumnal procession. They are wayward, dilatory, irrelevant days, and come in the rear of the retreating season, like indolent nymphs that, dressed for the nuptials, only arrived for the funeral, and could not abandon their voluptuous moods. They wear their bridal veils, and look at us reminiscently through clouds of mist. These beautiful, dreamy days appear to have been thrown off somewhere like fragments by the revolving August, and they come along like the Leonids, and as softly disappear. We call them the Indian summer.

—*J. P. Mowbray.*

The Hirschwald is an enchanted place on such an evening, when the mists lie low on the turf, and overhead the delicate, bare branches of the silver birches stand out clear against the soft sky, while the little moon looks down kindly on the damp November world. Where the trees thicken into a wood, the fragrance of the wet earth and rotting leaves kicked up by the horses' hoofs fills my soul with delight. I particularly love that smell—it brings before me the entire benevolence of Nature, for ever working death and decay, so piteous in themselves, into the means of fresh life and glory, and sending up sweet odors as she works.

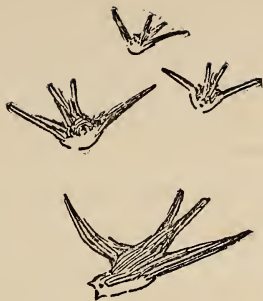
—“*Elizabeth and her German Garden.*”

A spirit haunts the year's last hours,
Dwelling amidst these yellowing bowers :
 To himself he talks ;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
 In the walks ;
 Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers ;
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

—*Tennyson.*

The sky was hung with various shades of gray, and mists hovered about the distant mountains—a melancholy nature. The leaves were falling on all sides like the last illusions of youth under the tears of irremediable grief. A brood of chattering birds were chasing each other through the shrubberies, and playing games among the branches, like a knot of hiding schoolboys. The ground strewn with leaves, brown, yellow and reddish ; the trees half-stripped, some more, some less, and decked in ragged splendors of dark-red, scarlet and yellow.

—*Amiel's Journal.*

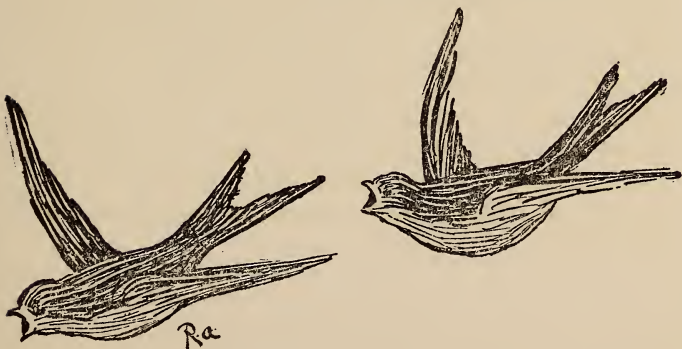


NOVEMBER DAYS

Flying, flying—
I watch the swallows flying,
Flitting south before November snows,
Leaving the delaying leaves a-dying
Broken-hearted for the buried rose.

Follow, follow—
Everything must follow ;—
Even the memory of the summer dies.
Follow, follow ; good-by, happy swallow
Flying southward as the summer flies.

Ellen Mackay Hutchinson



AUTUMN FIRES.

In the other gardens
 And all up the vale,
 From the autumn bonfires
 See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over
 And all the summer flowers,
 The red fire blazes,
 The gray smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!
 Something bright in all!
 Flowers in the summer,
 Fires in the fall!

—*Stevenson.*

TO THE WEST-WIND.

O wild west-wind, thou breath of autumn's being,
Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves
dead

Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill :
Wild spirit, which art moving everywhere ;
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, O hear !

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;
A wave to pant beneath thy power and share
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable ! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be
The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip the skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision, I would ne'er have
striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.

O, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One like to thee : tameless and swift and proud.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
What if my leaves are falling like its own !
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit, fierce,
My spirit ; be thou me, impetuous one !
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth ;
And by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy ! O wind,
If winter comes, can spring be far behind ?

—*Shelley.*

It was the dawn of winter ; sword in sheath,
Change veiled and mild, came down the gradual
air

With cold slow smiles that hid the doom beneath.

Five days to die in yet were autumn's, ere
The last leaf withered from his flowerless wreath.

—*Swinburne.*

Now through the copse, where the fox is found,
And over the stream, at a mighty bound,
And over the high lands, and over the low,
O'er furrows, o'er meadows, the hunters go !
Away !—as a hawk flies full at its prey,
So flyeth the hunter, away—away !
From the burst at the cover till set of sun,
When the red fox dies, and—the day is done !

Hark, hark !—What sound on the wind is borne ?

'Tis the conquering voice of the hunter's horn.

The horn—the horn !

The merry, bold voice of the hunter's horn !

—Barry Cornwall.

I never sit by the clustered dead leaves and listen to their faint rustlings as the wind moves among them but I fancy they are whispering of the days gone by. What of the vanished spring-tide, when they first timidly looked forth ? They greeted the returning birds, the whole merry host of northbound warblers, and what startling facts of the bird-world they might reveal !

—Charles C. Abbott.

There is nothing to fret us in this change from shade to sunshine, from green leaves to brown. The world is not dead because of it. While the sun looks down upon the woods to-day there arises a sweet odor, pleasant as the breath of roses. The world dead indeed! What more vigorous and full of life than the mosses covering the rich wood-mould? Before me, too, lies a long-fallen tree cloaked in moss greener than the summer pastures. Not the sea alone possesses transforming magic; there is also a "*wood-change* into something rich and strange." Never does the thought of death and decay centre about such a sight. The chickadee drops from the branches above, looks the moss-clad log over carefully, and, when again poised on an overhanging branch, loudly lisps its praises. What if it is winter when you witness such things? One swallow may not make a summer, but a single chickadee will draw the sting from any winter morning.

—*Charles C. Abbott.*

The simplicity of winter has a deep moral. The return of Nature, after such a career of splendor and prodigality, to habits so simple and austere, is not lost either upon the head or the heart. It is the philosopher coming back from the banquet and the wine to a cup of water and a crust of bread.

—*Burroughs.*

Now look down from your hillside across the valley. The trees are leafless, but this is the season to study their anatomy ; and did you ever notice before how much color there is in the twigs of many of them ? And the smoke from those chimneys is so blue it seems like a feeder of the sky into which it flows.

—*Lowell.*



O hemlock tree! O hemlock tree! how faithful
are thy branches!

Green not alone in summer time,
But in the winter's frost and rime!

O hemlock tree! O hemlock tree! how faithful
are thy branches!

Longfellow

Ra.

REQUIEM.

December 3, 1894.

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me :
*Here he lies where he longed to be ;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.*

—Stevenson.

The preludings of Winter are as beautiful as those of Spring. In a gray December day, when, as the farmers say, it is too cold to snow, his numbed fingers will let fall doubtfully a few star-shaped flakes, the snow-drops and anemones that harbinger his more assured reign.

—*Lowell.*

There was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly ;
The river was dumb and could not speak,
For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun ;
A single crow on the tree-top bleak
From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun.

—*Lowell.*

The morning was bound in blue and gold. Wherever the long shafts of the sun fell, a gold-stone sparkle followed; but the shadows had the tint of the lilac, or of an ærified amethyst. The children of Aurora perceived that manna had fallen in the night, and went forth to gather it; but they wisely carried neither scrip nor basket, knowing they could lay none by for the morrow. In May we indeed believed, with the Rosicrucians, that there might be an immortal virtue in May-dew; in December we discover it is lodged in the *frost*. Every blade of grass is shot full of minute crystalline arrow-heads, which might be drawn out entire, could there be found for the task a hand of sufficient coldness and delicacy.

—*Edith M. Thomas.*

The snow which falls in these obvious crystalline patterns is of the lightest and most diaphanous quality. A broken branch lies upon the ground completely covered with this delicate counterpane, yet every twig and bud is still plainly defined. I have a fancy that I would like to see half-blown crimson roses inclosed, but not concealed in such a cool white shrine. The season which most regard as forbiddingly ascetic—has it not its touches of refinement and luxury?

—*Edith M. Thomas.*

Every leaf and twig was covered with a sparkling ice armor. Even the grasses in exposed fields were hung with diamond pendants which jingled merrily when brushed by the foot of the traveller. . . . It was as if some superincumbent stratum of the earth had been removed in the night, exposing to light a bed of untarnished crystals.

—*Thoreau.*

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain
peak,

From the snow five thousand summers old ;
On open wold and hill-top bleak

It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet, on the wanderer's cheek;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare.

—*Lowell.*

Look up at the miracle of the falling snow,—the
air a dizzy maze of whirling, eddying flakes, noise-
lessly transforming the world, the exquisite crys-
tals dropping in ditch and gutter, and disguising
in the same suit of spotless livery all objects upon
which they fall.

—*Burroughs.*

The time draws near the birth of Christ :
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

—*Tennyson.*

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM.

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie ;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by ;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light,
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
Oh, morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth !
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given !
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven,
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem !
Descend to us, we pray ;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great, glad tidings tell ;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel !

—*Phillips Brooks.*

A CHRISTMAS GREETING.

Speed my Thought, oh speed my Thought,
Over the miles of snow !
Never before, to bear to her door
Love with his looks aglow,
Had'st thou so far to go !
Take for a chime bells of my rhyme
Over the miles of snow.

Stand, my Thought, oh stand my Thought !
Fled are the miles of snow.
Call, O Love ! to her window above,
In the voice her heart must know.
'Tis the time of mistletoe ;
Sing in the night to her window alight,
In the night of stars and snow !

—*Helen Gray Cone.*

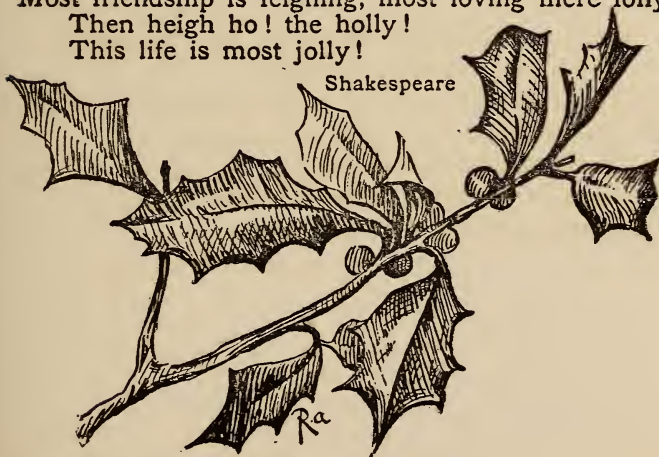


Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,

Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly!

Shakespeare



I never knew before how beautiful the dead tree trunks were. They shone with new colors ; delicious sombres of Vandyke, and soft, dull terracottas, and deep sage greens, with splashes of bronze where the light burnished the boles. The vistas shifted and arranged themselves in colonnades and spectral avenues, through which the bacchante lights danced, and along which the stately cedars and hemlocks, tonsured by the snow, stood in priestly gravity, chanting a new gloria. Back of all this paganism of the mind there was a softer association, somehow emitting a deeper muffled tone of expectation, as if the minster bells of Christmas were already rung by the wind, and were reverberating through these cathedral aisles.

—*J. P. Mowbray.*

SNOW-FLAKES.

Out of the bosom of the Air,
Out of the cloud folds of her garments shaken,
Over the woodlands brown and bare,
Over the harvest-fields forsaken,
Silent and soft, and slow
Descends the snow.

Even as our cloudy fancies take
Suddenly shape in some divine expression,
Even as the troubled heart doth make
In the white countenance confession,
The troubled sky reveals
The grief it feels.

This is the poem of the air,
Slowly in silent syllables recorded;
This is the secret of despair,
Long in its cloudy bosom hoarded,
Now whispered and revealed
To wood and field.

—*Longfellow.*

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light ;
The year is dying in the night ;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow ;
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more ;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;
Ring out the thousand wars of old
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

—*Tennyson.*

Darkness and light reign alike. Snow is on the ground. Cold is the air. The winter is blossoming in frost-flowers. Why is the ground hidden? So hath God wiped out the past; so hath He spread the earth like an unwritten page for a new year! Upon this lies, white and tranquil, the emblem of newness and purity, the virgin robes of the yet unstained year.

—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

SNOW-BLOOM.

Where does the snow go,
So white on the ground?
Under May's azure
No flake can be found.
Look into the lily
Some sweet summer hour;
There blooms the snow
In the heart of the flower.

Where does the love go,
Frozen to grief?
Along the heart's fibres
Its cold thrill is brief.
The snow-fall of sorrow
Turns not to dry dust;
It lives in white blossoms
Of patience and trust.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

LOVE IN WINTER.

Between the berried holly-bush
The Blackbird whistled to the Thrush :
“ Which way did bright-eyed Bella go ?
Look, Speckled-breast, across the snow,—
Are those her dainty tracks I see,
That wind toward the shrubbery ? ”

The Thristle pecked the berries still.
“ No need for looking, Yellow-bill ;
Young Frank was there an hour ago,
Half frozen, waiting in the snow ;
His callow beard was white with rime,
Tchuck,—’t is a merry pairing time ! ”

“ What would you ? ” twittered in the Wren ;
“ These are the reckless ways of men.
I watched them bill and coo as though
They thought the sign of spring was snow ;
If men but timed their loves as we,
’T would save this inconsistency.”

“Nay, Gossip,” chirped the Robin, “nay;
I like their unreflective way.
Besides I heard enough to show
Their love is proof against the snow;—
‘Why wait,’ he said, ‘why wait for May,
When love can warm a winter’s day?’”

—*Austin Dobson.*

St. Agnes’ Eve—Ah! bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp’d trembling through the frozen
grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold.

—*Keats.*

Drag on, long night of winter, in whose heart,
Nurse of regrets, the dead spring yet has part!
Drag on, O night of dreams! O night of fears!
Fed by the summers of the bygone years!

—*William Morris.*

IN FEBRUARY.

Like mimic meteors the snow
In silence out of heaven sifts,
And wanton winds that wake and blow
Pile high their monumental drifts.

And looking through the window-panes
I see, 'mid loops and angles crossed,
The dainty geometric skeins
Drawn by the fingers of the Frost.

'Tis here at dawn where comes his love,
All eager and with smile benign,
A golden Sunbeam from above,
To read the Frost's gay valentine.

—*Frank Dempster Sherman.*

IN SNOW

The golden meadows sleep in snow;
The arrowy winds about them blow,
And icy sparkles come and go.

The golden meadows sleep in snow;
But underneath the grasses grow
And daisies dream of bud and blow.

The golden meadows sleep in snow;
My little maiden, dost thou know
How half unconscious love may grow?

Ellen Mackay Hutchinson



BEFORE SUNRISE IN WINTER.

A purple cloud hangs half-way down ;
Sky, yellow gold below ;
The naked trees, beyond the town,
Like masts against it show.

Bare masts and spars of our earth-ship,
With shining snow-sails furled ;
And through the sea of space we slip,
That flows all round the world.

—*Edward Rowland Sill.*

The moon above the eastern wood
Shone at its full ; the hill-range stood
Transfigured in the silver flood,
Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,
Dead white, save where some sharp ravine
Took shadow, or the sombre green
Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black
Against the whiteness at their back.
For such a world and such a night
Most fitting that unwarning light,
Which only seemed where'er it fell
To make the darkness visible.

—*Whittier.*

In Winter the earth is frost bound, and incrustured with ice and snow; but soon the voice of Spring will call, and everywhere there shall be life, and growth, and beauty; so it is with man, his winter has been long and dark; but the sun of God's love shall shine, and the crusts of tyranny and the frosts of oppression shall melt away beneath its rays, and the humblest as well as the loftiest creature shall yet stand in the light and liberty of the sons of God.

—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

Late February days; and now, at last,
Might you have thought that winter's woe was
past;

So fair the sky was, and so soft the air.
The happy birds were hurrying here and there,
As something soon would happen. Reddened now
The hedges, and in gardens many a bough
Was overbold of buds. Sweet days, indeed,
Although past road and bridge, through wood
and mead,

Swift ran the brown stream, swirling by the grass,
And in the hillside hollows snow yet was.

—*William Morris.*

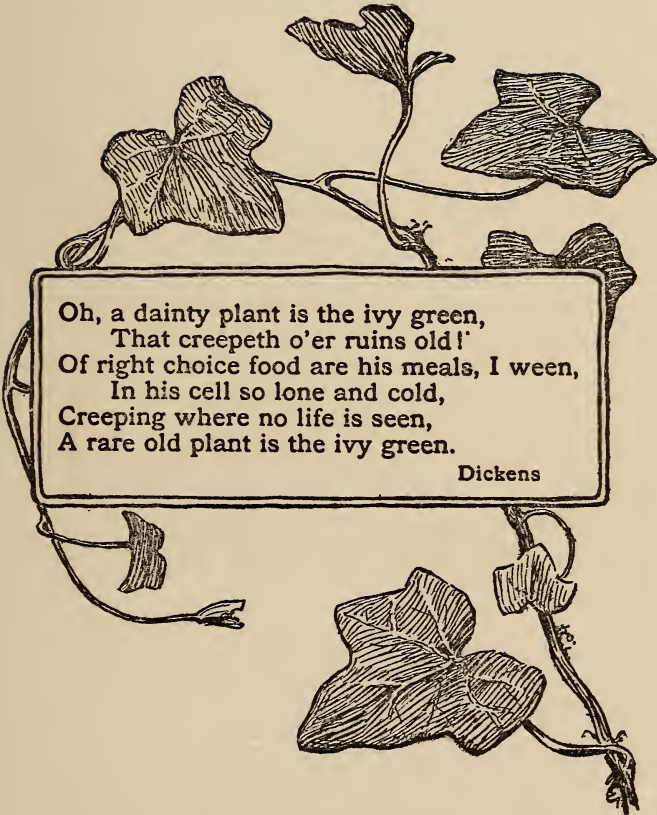
When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To who ;
To-whit, to-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-who ;
To-whit, to-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

—*Shakespeare.*

Bright February days have a stronger charm of hope about them than any other days in the year. One likes to pause in the mild rays of the sun, and look over the gates at the patient plow-horses turning at the end of the furrow, and think that the beautiful year is all before one. The birds seem to feel just the same ; their notes are as clear as the clear air. There are no leaves on the trees and hedgerows, but how green all the grassy fields are ! and the dark purplish brown of the plowed earth and the bare branches is beautiful too. What a glad world this looks like, as one drives or rides along the valleys and over the hills !

—*George Eliot.*



Oh, a dainty plant is the ivy green,
That creepeth o'er ruins old !
Of right choice food are his meals, I ween,
In his cell so lone and cold,
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.

Dickens

*RESURGAM.

All silently, and soft as sleep,
The snow fell, flake on flake.

Slumber, spent Earth ! and dream of flowers
Till spring-time bid you wake.

Again the deadened bough shall bend
With blooms of sweetest breath.

Oh, miracle of miracles,
This life that follows death !

—*Aldrich.*

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